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CHURCH EFFICIENCY

Response of Canadian Preachers to War Demands

Frequently we have heard of the strenuous efforts which have been put forth during the last year and a half on the part of ministers in Canada. The war conditions have brought to them all sorts of unexpected demands, and one of the most important has been the call from those who mourn for father, brother, son, husband, or lover, killed in the trenches. Many of the ministers have been devoting much of their time to recruiting, and numbers have been appointed chaplains for training camps in Canada, and some for overseas. But recently we have learned through the *Canadian Baptist* that there are "hundreds of pastors who cannot hope to be made chaplains, and who are likely to be given an opportunity of taking positions as combatants." There is hope that the Minister of Militia will authorize the enlistment of a regiment of ministers, to be known as the "Fighting Parsons" regiment.

English Church Union

The *Guardian* of January 6 gives a digest of a report from Mr. H. W. Hill, secretary of the English Church Union. This report invites our attention because of the light it sheds upon certain movements that concern the church. Reference is made to an invitation which has been sent "by certain Low Churchmen and Separatists" to some American revivalists to visit England in March, and also to a scheme under consideration called the "Laymen's Christian Crusade." Mr. Hill expresses the hope that the revivalist scheme may be canceled. The proposal to revise the Prayer Book, Mr. Hill says, is prompted by motives other than those generally offered, which are to solve existing difficulties and to enrich the Prayer Book. He thinks the duty of faithfully using the Prayer Book as it is still

remains. There are signs that when the war is over disastrous proposals may be made in regard to marriage. Mr. Hill says, "Already I have seen what are called reforms advocated in the interest of future population of the nation which are sufficiently alarming to lead me to write a word of warning." The decision on the Kikuyu controversy has not committed the church irrevocably to a course which shuts out all prospects of reunion, but he adds significantly, "Allow Kikuyu practices and these hopes will be blasted."

A Remarkable Men's Club

More than one hundred thousand laymen have banded themselves together in the Stoneman's Fellowship Club in Philadelphia. The *Literary Digest* of January 8 regards this grouping of men as so significant that it devotes a whole page to it, and gives condensed history of the organization as follows:

"About three years ago, Rev. H. C. Stone, vicar of the Chapel of the Holy Communion, connected with the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity in Philadelphia, organized a men's club in his parish. It took its name from its founder, and in the last few months has rapidly grown until it has become a body of about 110,000 men—'members of all sorts of Christian bodies and members of none,' bound in close fellowship, meeting for prayer and Bible-reading. There are said to be no dues or contributions, wealthy laymen meeting necessary expenses. It was found necessary to use, first, the University of Pennsylvania gymnasium, then the huge Convention Hall, for the regular Saturday-night meetings. According to the *Public Ledger*, the club includes among its members 1,000 Philadelphia policemen, more than 1,000 letter-carriers, 2,000 street railway employees, 1,000 Pennsylvania Railroad

workers, 500 members of the Philadelphia Fire Department, 500 employees of the Bell Telephone Company, and 500 men connected with the Adams Express Company.'"

When the club was first organized it was proposed to admit members to three degrees. The first degree consisted of a solemn dedication and enrolment; the second was reached through the baptism of those unbaptized, and the ratification of baptismal vows on the part of those who had been baptized; while the third degree was reached through a rite consisting of the laying on of hands by a Protestant Episcopal bishop and the celebration of the Holy Communion. The idea of fellowship has been given very definite emphasis, and now there are ten non-Episcopalians to one Episcopalian in the club.

But this organization has not made such a stir in Philadelphia without meeting criticism. During a recent political campaign it was asserted that the organization was being used to oppose Roman Catholic candidates for office. Following this a meeting of 600 laymen and ministers, representing the non-Episcopal Protestant churches of Philadelphia, met, with a view to changing the ritual because it was affirmed that the Episcopal church had been using the organization for purposes of proselytizing. The *Philadelphia Presbyterian* protests it is not seemly "to see some well-reputed Presbyterian elder or an official layman of some other denomination passing innocently up through the Stoneman's degrees, in order to bow before the bishop or, by the laying on of hands, to be made an Episcopalian without knowing it."

In addition to these attacks from without there comes one from within the Episcopal church itself. An enthusiastic writer in the *Churchman* writes of the organization in glowing terms, but tells of a clergyman who has declared "The bishop has no more

right to go to a club and confirm the members than he has to go out into the street and confirm men."

What a splendid example this organization provides in its brief history of the difficulties to be met by the movements toward church union! This remarkable organization which has bewildered its organizers by its sudden growth still remains in the stage of development and invites our observation.

The Churches and the War

Rev. Charles S. Macfarland, general secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, has just returned from a fraternal visit to the Hague, Berlin, Berne, Paris, and London, where he has been in prayer and conference with representative leaders of the Christian churches relative to relief work, religious work in prison camps, and other general interests of the churches, and for the purpose of deepening the relations of fellowship and co-operation between the Christian forces of America and those of each of these countries. He reports a hearty and warm response in all these quarters.

Dr. Macfarland believes that we are as yet greatly uninformed as to the whole situation and that ultimately there will be many misunderstandings to be cleared up. The American churches will have a great opportunity in the period of reconciliation and reconstruction to follow the war.

The one thing which is preparing the way for this is the relief work of America. The Christian work in which American Christianity has taken so large a part in the prison camps of all countries, the self-sacrificing service of our physicians and Red Cross nurses, as well as the response to the needs in Armenia, Persia, and Belgium, will open up future service, and Dr. Macfarland urges that we redouble our work of charity and relief.